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Professor J. D. Bruner then spoke advising a joint meeting with the Modern Language Association, in the near future. Professor S. W. Cutting and Professor J. S. Nollen also expressed themselves in favor of it. No action was taken.

The reading of papers was then taken up.

2. "Thomas Murner's prose writings of the year 1520." By Professor Ernst Voss, of the University of Wisconsin.

The paper, which was discussed by Professor S. W. Cutting, will be printed in the *Journal of Germanic Philology*.

3. "The autobiographical elements in William Langland's *Piers the Plowman*." By Professor Albert E. Jack, of Lake Forest University.

Remarks were offered by Professors F. A. Blackburn, and C. W. Pearson (Northwestern University).

That the poem is autobiographical has been the unanimous opinion of English scholars, only two, Wright and Morley, have dissented on two or three minor details. However, there are many plausible reasons for thinking that the traditional view of the poem on this point is quite incorrect. The dreams cannot certainly be thought of as real, and very probably also the wanderings are but a part of the conventional framework of the poem. Nor must we think of the poet as an idle fellow, sometimes begging and sometimes singing masses for hire, as he makes his William do; for in that case he practised those very things against which he uttered his severest denunciation. Nor can we be certain of his wife's name, his residence, occupation, age, and other minor personal details. The poem probably gives the spiritual life of its author, but not his outer life.

4. "On the development of Roots and their meanings." By Professor F. A. Wood, of Cornell College. [Printed in *The American Journal of Philology*, XIX, 40 f.]

### THIRD SESSION.

The President called the meeting to order at 2.30 p. m.

5. "One phase of Keats's treatment of nature." By Mr. Edward P. Morton, of the University of Indiana.

When I speak of Keats's treatment of nature, I do not mean by "nature" what Pope or Dante or Aristotle meant, but use the word always in its

modern application to the external phenomena of nature, without reference to their causes; in short, to what we see of sky, of stream, of hill and plain, of woods and flowers, and of animal and insect life.

A good many of Keats's habits of mind and expression group themselves naturally under well known heads. But there are in Keats's poems a large number of cases which do not come under any established classification. For example, although I found in 10,000 lines of Keats (all but the dramas) 188 personifications, I also found 357 cases where sentiency only was ascribed to insentient objects. My purpose in this paper is to show that we can and do ascribe sentiency to insentient objects without personifying, and that such cases are numerous enough to justify their separate classification.

When we say that the wind howls, or shrieks, or whistles, or moans, or that the brook babbles or murmurs, we speak of winds and brooks in terms that imply sentiency, but we have not thus far personified them. We think of shrieking winds and babbling brooks as winds and brooks, and not as persons.

We may go a step beyond mere imitation of sounds and motions, however, for we find that certain physical aspects of nature are like certain human moods, and that these resemblances are expressed in human terms. For example, hard rock is often called stubborn; but we think of the rock as stubborn rock and not as a stubborn person; in short, even if we grant that the idea of personality is inseparably involved in such words as stubborn, modest, and proud, we lay the emphasis upon the trait and not upon the personality.

We are so used to personifying nature, that perhaps an illustration, not from poetry, but from burlesque, will make my point more clear. An American comic writer tells us that he once smoked "the ablest tobacco he could find." Surely there is not a trace of personification in this grotesqueness, and yet the man has applied to his tobacco a word commonly used of people; that is, he has ascribed sentiency to an insentient object without personifying it.

It is quite possible, therefore, to describe nature in terms of man without distinctly personifying nature; it is possible in some cases to predicate sentiency only, and in others to lay the stress upon the trait and leave the idea of person unobtrusive.

This ascription of sentiency, which is really only a matter of rhetoric, of technique, has already been noticed and named by at least two men, Ruskin, in his "Pathetic Fallacy," and E. A. Abbott, in his *Shakespearian Grammar*, under the caption "Personal Metaphor."

Mr. Ruskin's term, "pathetic fallacy," is unsatisfactory, because he pretty clearly limits it to the subjective treatment of nature, whereas the ascription of sentiency may be used to express at least two other attitudes of mind. Mr. Abbott's term, "personal metaphor," is unsatisfactory, because, if my contention holds, the idea of person is either unobtrusive or wholly absent.

In default of a better term, I have named this ascription of sentiency to insentient nature—which is a rhetorical device, essentially a metaphor; is based on the fact that resemblances readily attract attention; and is used, like metaphor, for added vividness—*vivification*.

In 10,000 lines of Keats, I found 357 cases of vivification. Keats, in his treatment of nature, used vivification oftener than he did any other device, and used it so often that we must take account of it in any detailed statement of his attitude toward nature.

Professor C. von Klenze, Professor A. H. Tolman, and Mr. K. D. Jessen discussed this paper.

By vote of the Association it was decided that the session be closed at 5.00 p. m., and that each discussion be limited to five minutes.

6. "The inflectional types of the qualifying adjective in German." By Professor G. O. Curme, of the Northwestern University.

The paper was discussed by Professors H. Schmidt-Wartenberg and S. W. Cutting, and Dr. P. O. Kern.

7. "The component elements of *Aliscans*." By Professor Raymond Weeks, of the University of Missouri.

The author being prevented from attending the meeting, his paper was read by title.

8. "The gender of English loanwords in Danish." By Professor Daniel Kilham Dodge, of the University of Illinois. [Printed in *Americana Germanica*, II.]

Owing to the absence of the author the paper was presented by Professor L. A. Rhoades.

9. "On the Scandinavian element in English." By Professor Albert E. Egge, of The Washington Agricultural College.

This paper was read by Professor A. H. Tolman; and discussed by Professors G. Hempl, S. W. Cutting, H. Schmidt-Wartenberg, Dr. P. O. Kern, and Mr. F. J. Lange.

Except the few Greek and Latin words brought in with Christianity, the English language down to the Norman Conquest was almost entirely free from foreign elements. The main influence to which English was subject